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Ms. Cynthia A. Brown
Chief, Section on Administration
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20423-0001

Re: FD 35559, Saratoga & North Creek Railroad LLC: Operation Exemption, File #231173

Dear Ms. Brown:

The North Country Chamber of Commerce is the largest business and economic development organization in northern New York, representing more than 4,200 employers in Essex, Hamilton, Franklin, Clinton and northern Warren Counties. We serve as the leading entity for strategic development in the region, with a long record of engagement in the conservation, creation and maximization of transportation assets.

In addition, we host and lead the Adirondack On Track Partnership, a broad coalition of interests dedicated to the region's rail infrastructure, and I personally serve as Co-Chair of the North Country Regional Economic Development Council by appointment of the Governor.

We want to express our strongest possible support for the pending application of the Saratoga and North Creek Railroad to initiate freight service to Tahawus. The line from North Creek to Tahawus has been purposely retained through the years as an economic development asset, with this eventual restored activity specifically in mind -- accessing the former mine operations at Tahawus and allowing the movement of materials there to new markets by a means others than by truck. This will facilitate the creation of badly needed employment in this highly distressed and remote area of New York, tap the use of rail as a "greener" form of transportation for freight than trucks, complete the restoration of this historic and strategic infrastructure, and further bolster the sustainability of the entire short line.

In addition to the support of the North Country Chamber, I am also attaching a reference to rail in the Adirondacks from the recently completed and adopted North Country Regional Economic Development Plan. This state sponsored and approved plan specifically highlights the preservation and rehabilitation of all remaining rail infrastructure within the Adirondacks as a key strategic imperative.

I thank you for your consideration and look forward to seeing this worthy proposal approved and advanced as soon as possible.

Sincerely,


Garry F. Douglas
President and CEO

cc: Rep. William Owens
Rep. Chris Gibson
Senator Charles Schumer
Senator Kirsten Gillibrand
NYSDOT Commissioner Joan McDonald
Karen Rae, Governor's Deputy for Transportation

Home of:

North Country
Small Business
Council

Adirondack Coast
Visitors & Convention
Bureau

North Country
Industrial Council

Québec-New York
Corridor Coalition

New York's
Tech Valley

S.C.O.R.E.

Essex County
Business Council

Plattsburgh-
North Country
Service Corp.

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Franklin
Warren
Hamilton
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A Strong Partner for Strong Business in the North Country

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Strategy 4: Preservation and optimization of the North County's rail infrastructure as a vital supporting asset for future economic development and the region's desired place in the green economy. This will include, but not be limited to, the development of High Speed Rail in the Montreal-New York City corridor; preservation and full rehabilitation of the Adirondack railroad infrastructure from Remsen to Lake Placid; preservation and rehabilitation of the CSX rail infrastructure serving Newton Falls and southern St. Lawrence County and consideration of the relocation of rail lines that hamper community opportunities for economic growth.

Actions Yamsi promotes:

- Support the development of High Speed Rail in the Montreal-New York corridor, following established plans and commitments by NYSDOT and the Quebec Government. This must include collaboration with other regions in New York hosting portions of the Adirondack and Empire passenger rail corridors, via the statewide Chairman's Committee to be convened as a part of the Regional Plan process, and active advocacy for continued federal investment in High Speed Rail and for the continued inclusion of the Adirondack Corridor from Rouses Point to Schenectady as a target for federal and state investment

as funds become available. This aim will also be directly supported as part of our region's Canadian Connection strategy, being a shared aim of New York and Quebec, and will be the subject of the next Quebec-New York Summit targeted for 2012.

- Support for state, federal and private funding for the eventual rehabilitation of the entire Adirondack railroad from Remsen to Lake Placid as the last remaining rail access into the central Adirondacks, with accommodation for recreational trail use as well, as much as possible. First priority shall be accorded to fully rehabilitating the segment between Saranac Lake and Tupper Lake as phase one. Protected as a listed asset on the National Register of Historic Places, this infrastructure offers near-term tourism benefits and long-term strategic opportunities related to general economic development and the green movement of people and goods in and out of the Adirondack Park.
- Support for state, federal and private funding for the rehabilitation of the CSX rail infrastructure from the Watertown area to Newton Falls and southern St. Lawrence County, in support of paper making and other economic opportunities in that part of the region.

